

REMARKS:

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-23. Claims 1, 12, 15-17, 19 and 21-23 are amended herein. No new matter is presented. Thus, claims 1-23 are pending and under consideration. The rejections are traversed below.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(a):

Claims 1-3, 9-17, 19 and 21-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,032,124 (Saito).

The workflow method and system of Saito requires that the shipping document contain IDs of the two processes (entrance and exit nodes) where the document is provided with the information specifying the entrance and exit processes for circulation, and the entrance and exit of mutually differing business process (BP) definitions are linked (see, col. 2, lines 56-65 and col. 5, lines 15-28). As such, circulation of the shipping documents in Saito is implemented by coordination of the BP definitions describing the business processes.

The Examiner maintains the comparison of the Saito system for exchanging a shipping document among servers with the claimed association information. However, the document management unit (220) of Saito manages the shipping document (160), the next BP location described in the BP definition (150) by associating them and executes preprocessing to transmit the shipping document (160) to the remote server (110) by referring to the BP connection data (170) (see, col. 4, line 56 through col. 5, line 7). However, the shipping document (160) of Saito is limited to delivery control information and information on the shipping document itself.

In contrast to Saito, the claimed invention associates processes of multiple devices using "interprocess association information" based on a correspondence of process executing data of the devices. This, for example, enables association of a process executed by a device at corporation A with that of a device at corporation B, even when the process indicates a unique identifier of the device at corporation A.

As discussed with respect to Fig.4 of the present application, information is transmitted indicating a corresponding relationship between process executing data (i.e., a slip having ID as a864 and another slip having ID b446) and a process (a quote process having the ID A1001). In particular, the claimed invention does not require transmission of a pair of process IDs A1001 and B251, instead process A1001 is tied to or associated with process B251 based on the correspondence relationship transmitted.

Independent claim 1, by way of example, recites, “interchanging with the other process executing device interprocess association information indicative of the process executed by the process executing device in association with the process executed by the other process executing device” based on “a correspondence relation between the process executing data received and the process executed by the other process executing device.”

Claim 1 further recites, “processes are associated with one another among the plurality of process executing devices by sending and receiving data for executing a process without requiring sending and receiving of a process identifier” and “a process that cannot be associated with other processes in said process executing device is associated using association information that associates the process executed by said other process executing devices.” Independent claims 16 and 17 recite similar features.

Independent claim 12 recites, “storing interprocess association information indicative of a process executed by each of said plurality of process executing devices in association with the process executed by the other process executing device” in accordance with “a correspondence relation between process executing data received and the process executed by the other process executing device.” Claim 12 further recites, “distributing the interprocess association information to the process executing device”, where “processes are associated with one another... without requiring sending and receiving of a process identifier” and “a process that cannot be associated with other processes... is associated using association information that associates the process executed by said other process executing devices.” Independent claim 15 recites similar features.

Independent claim 19 recites, “interchanging process executing data with the external device via a first communication route” and “interchanging with the external device, via a second communication route, interprocess association information indicative of the process executed by the process executing device in association with the process executed by the external device.” Independent claims 21 and 22 recite similar features.

Independent claim 23 recites, “obtaining, via a first communication route, interprocess association information associating first and second processes respectively...” and “interchanging, via a second communication route, the process executing data and the interprocess association information indicative of said first and second processes between the processor and the external device.”

Claims 19 and 21-23 also recite that processes are associated with one another "... without requiring sending and receiving of a process identifier" and "a process that cannot be associated with other processes... is associated using association information."

Saito does not teach or suggest the above-discussed features of the claims including "interprocess association information", as recited in each of the independent claims 1, 12, 15-17, 19 and 21-23.

Therefore, Saito does not disclose each and every element of claims independent claims (MPEP §2131), and thus, it is submitted that the independent claims are patentable over Saito.

For at least the above-mentioned reasons, claims depending from the independent claims are patentably distinguishable over Saito. The dependent claims are also independently patentable. For example, as recited in claim 3, "said interprocess association information is part of the process executing data, and is the information for associating processes with each other using data that takes an exclusive value for each process of the series of process flows."

Saito does not teach or suggest interchanging "interprocess associaton information" that is part of the process executing data and is the information for "associating processes with each other using data that takes an exclusive value for each process of the series of process flows."

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a):

Claims 4-8, 18 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Saito in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,442,528 (Notani).

For at least the above-mentioned reasons distinguishing the independent claims, dependent claims 4-8, 18 and 20 are patentably distinguishable over Saito and Notani.

The Examiner relies on Notani as teaching interchanging interprocess association information using a transfer method different from the method used by said process executing data interchanging unit. Notani is directed to an exemplar workflow where a global collaboration designer can create sophisticated multi-enterprise workflows with synchronous, asynchronous, sub-workflow, and-splits, or-splits, etc. (see, col. 6, lines 7-33). However, Notani merely discusses consideration of format, transport and semantic standards for the global collaboration and does not teach or suggest exchanging "interprocess association information" between devices using different transfer methods as taught by the claimed invention.

As mentioned above, the shipping document of Saito is limited to delivery control information and information of the shipping document itself.

Saito and Notani, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest use of "interprocess association information" to link processes produced from difference devices including the features recited in the dependent claims 4-8, 18 and 20.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: 11/14/2006
1201 New York Avenue, NW, 7th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501

By: Temnit Afework
Temnit Afework
Registration No. 58,202